

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SS-20 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5628

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12575

FOR ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HUMMEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, TH

SUBJ: CIVAIR: US/THAI BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. STATE 155420

B. BANGKOK 11099

C. BANGKOK 11918

1. I APPRECIATE THE GUIDANCE AND RATIONALIZATION FOR US AVIATION POLICY VIS-A-VIS THAILAND PROVIDED IN REFTEL A. HOWEVER, WITH THE RESUMPTION OF CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS PRESUMABLY ONLY WEEKS AWAY, I WOULD LIKE TO SET FORTH AGAIN MY VIEWS ON THE REASONS WHY WE NEED TO BE AS ACCOMMODATING AS POSSIBLE IN THE ECONOMIC AREA AS ONE MEANS OF SLOWING, IF NOT PREVENTING, THE EROSION OF OUR IMPORTANT ASSETS IN THE POLITICAL/MILITARY AREA. MOREOVER, IN THIS INSTANCE THE BALANCE OF ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE UNDER THE CIVIL AIR AGREEMENT IS ALREADY SO OVERWHELMINGLY IN OUR FAVOR (THE RATIO IS ROUGHLY 10 TO 1 AS CALCULATED IN WASHINGTON) THAT ONE COULD MAKE AN ARGUMENT FOR ACCOMMODATION JUST ON THE GROUNDS OF EQUITY UNDER THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT.

2. IN MY OPINION, A FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE TOWARD RTG REQUESTS FOR EXPANDED ROUTE RIGHTS IS CLEARLY IN OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONAL INTEREST. THE EMBASSY HAS ALREADY POINTED OUT

(REFTEL C) THAT MANY CIVILIAN THAI OFFICIALS, AMBASSADOR ANAN AMONG THEM, ARE DEEPLY SKEPTICAL OF CLAIMS THAT THAILAND ENJOYS A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE USG. INSTEAD, THESE CIVILIAN OFFICIALS, SOME OF WHOM ARE NOW SUCCEEDING TO POSITIONS OF GENUINE POWER IN THE FLEDGLING CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, ARE SEEKING TO ASSERT THEMSELVES, AND WHAT THEY CONSTRUE TO BE THAILAND'S LEGITIMATE INTERESTS, AGAINST, FIRST, THE LONG-DOMINANT THAI MILITARY CLASS, AND SECOND, FOREIGN INTERESTS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES. I AM CONVINCED IT IS IN THE US INTEREST TO SUPPORT THE EMERGENCE OF A CIVILIAN-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND. ITS NEW MINISTRIES WANT AND NEED SUCCESSES TO SHOW FOR THEIR EFFORTS. IT BEHOOVES US, THEREFORE, TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT SUCH SUCCESSES DO NOT COME AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS, AND I BELIEVE IN THE CIVIL FIELD WE COULD ACCORD THE RTG A SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC POLITICAL GAIN AT NO ECONOMIC LOSS TO US AIRLINE INTERESTS.

3. I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT A GRANT OF ADDITIONAL ROUTE RIGHTS TO THE RTG COULD WELL CREATE PRECEDENTIAL PROBLEMS FOR THE USG IN THIRD COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS. HOWEVER, ON THE BASIS OF THE NIMBLE FOOTWORK DISPLAYED BY THE US DELEGATION IN THE TALKS HERE IN JUNE, I AM CONFIDENT OF THE ABILITY OF USG NEGOTIATORS TO SIDE-SLIP THE MOST-FAVORED-NATION ARGUMENT SHOULD A GRANT TO THE RTG BE RAISED AS A PRECEDENT BY THIRD COUNTRIES. ONE COULD EVEN ASSERT IN GOOD FAITH THAT CONCESSIONS TO THE THAI COULD CONSTITUTE A POSITIVE ARGUMENT IN ROUTE AND/OR CAPACITY CONSULTATIONS WITH COUNTRIES WHOSE AIRLINES EARN MORE IN A GIVEN BI-LATERAL MARKET THAN DO US AIRLINES. IT WOULD BE EVIDENCE THAT THE USG IS PREPARED TO DO WHAT IT IS ASKING SOME OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO DO, I.E., TO ADJUST ROUTE RIGHTS AND/OR CAPACITY IN FAVOR OF THE AIRLINES OF A BILATERAL PARTNER WHOSE AIRLINES ARE AT A SIGNIFICANT REVENUE DISADVANTAGE UNDER A BILATERAL AGREEMENT.

4. FINALLY, IN PURELY COMMERCIAL TERMS WE CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE RTG, DISENCHANTED BY THE RESULTS OF AN APPROACH TO US ON THE GROUNDS OF EQUALITY IN ROUTES UNDER THE BILATERAL, WILL VIEW PRESSURE ON US AIRLINES  
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HERE AS THE ONLY MEANS BY WHICH TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR OBJECTIVES. SUCH A STEP WOULD NOT ONLY BE HARMFUL TO US COMMERCIAL AIRLINE INTERESTS, BUT WOULD DO FURTHER DAMAGE TO OUR OVERALL POLITICAL-MILITARY INTERESTS HERE. WITH THIS IN MIND WE ARE CONTINUING DISCREETLY TO PROBE THAI INTENTIONS IN THIS AREA.  
KINTNER

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## Message Attributes

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